SEA/RC58/R5          ASIA-PACIFIC STRATEGY ON EMERGING DISEASES

The Regional Committee,

Recalling World Health Assembly resolutions WHA48.13; WHA54.14; WHA56.19; WHA56.28; WHA56.29, and WHA58.5 relating to prevention and control of communicable diseases,

Recalling its own resolutions SEA/RC53/R11 relating to cross-border collaboration on control of communicable diseases, and SEA/RC57/R3 relating to emergency health preparedness,

Considering the complementarity of the International Health Regulations (2005) to the Asia-Pacific Strategy on Emerging Diseases,

Recognizing that emerging diseases such as SARS and avian influenza pose serious threats to public health and to economic and social stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and beyond, and

Appreciating WHO’s initiatives to promote intercountry and interregional collaboration and the actions taken to develop the Asia-Pacific Strategy on Emerging Diseases,

1. URGES Member States:

(a) to strengthen their capacity for surveillance and response to detect, verify, report and respond to communicable disease outbreaks as a public health emergency;

(b) to consider implementation of the Strategy to further strengthen surveillance and response to emerging infectious diseases;

(c) to increase cooperation among themselves through appropriate mechanisms in surveillance, preparedness and outbreak investigation of emerging diseases;

(d) to strengthen collaboration and coordination between the health, veterinary and agricultural sectors, including surveillance systems, to enhance early detection of zoonotic diseases such as avian influenza, Nipah infection and SARS, and

(e) to develop, share and implement national preparedness and response plans as soon as possible, with special emphasis on avian influenza, and
2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

(a) to continue support to Member States in strengthening their capacity for communicable disease surveillance, outbreak alert and response, including facilitating timely transportation and testing of samples;

(b) to facilitate establishment and networking of regional centres of excellence to coordinate and advise on effective implementation of the Asia-Pacific Strategy on Emerging Diseases;

(c) to facilitate stockpiling of essential medicines, vaccines and personal protection equipment at appropriate locations;

(d) to support Member States in developing and implementing national influenza pandemic preparedness plans;

(e) to support Member States in mobilizing technical, logistic and financial resources for facilitating implementation of the Asia-Pacific Strategy on emerging diseases and the influenza pandemic preparedness plans, and

(f) to explore the possibility of extending cooperation in this area to the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Seventh Meeting,
10 September 2005